

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SOPN PEPR PINT SHUM HA DR
SUBJ: HAITIAN REACTION TO DOMINICAN ELECTIONS

REF: PORT AU PRINCE 2225

1. THE GOH IS DISTURBED BY THE EFFUSIVE FRONTPAGE TREATMENT ACCORDED THE DOMINICAN ELECTIONS BY GENERALLY COMPLAINT, PRO-GOVERNMENT DAILY "LE MATIN". A RELIABLE MEDIA SOURCE TOLD EMBOFF THAT LE MATIN CO-EDITOR DUMAYRIC CHARLIER, WHO SPENT FOUR DAYS IN SANTO DOMINGO DURING THE ELECTIONS, HAS FALLEN INTO DISFAVOR AS A RESULT OF HIS EMPHASIS ON DEMOCRATIC PROCEDURES AND INSTITUTIONS, THE PLURALITY OF PARTIES INCLUDING TROTSKYITES AND VARIOUS COMMUNIST GROUPS, AND THE ROLE OF THE FREE PRESS IN REPORTING ELECTORAL DEVELOPMENTS. EVEN AFTER HIS RETURN ON MAY 18, CHARLIER, LONG-TIME SECRETARY GENERAL OF ASSOCIATION OF HAITIAN JOURNALISTS, CONTINUED TO FILL PAGES FOR SEVERAL DAYS WITH HIS PONDEROUS ACCOUNT OF EVENTS PRECEDING AND IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING DOMINICAN ELECTIONS.

2. EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE BEEN WONDERING WHY THE USUALLY PERIPATETIC CHARLIER HAD BEEN KEEPING SUCH A LOW PROFILE IN RECENT WEEKS. REASON BECAME EVIDENT WHEN TODAY'S LE
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MATIN APPEARED WITH A LENGTHY FRONTPAGE ARTICLE QUOTING SISTER DAILY "LE NOUVELLISTE'S" PRAISE FOR CHARLIER'S COVERAGE, AN ARTICLE WHICH APPEARED ONLY YESTERDAY (JUNE 15). WE BELIEVE THE NOUVELLISTE'S ARTICLE WAS WRITTEN AT EXPRESS REQUEST OF CHARLIER IN ORDER TO ACQUIT HIMSELF BEFORE HIS GOH CRITICS. REMAINDER OF LE MATIN ARTICLE CONSISTED OF AN EXPLANATION OF HOW AND WHY CHARLIER "HAD BEEN ASSIGNED TO

TRAVEL TO SANTO DOMINGO" TO COVER EVENTS WHICH ARE OF GREAT INTEREST TO HAITIANS. "WE BELIEVE," SAID LE MATIN, "THAT THE PRESENT JUNCTURE IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IS TOO IMPORTANT AND THAT ITS PEOPLE ARE TODAY TOO SENSITIZED AND TOO MOTIVATED BY SUCH A VARIED BASKET OF POLITICAL PARTIES OF ALL IDEOLOGICAL TENDENCIES (INCLUDING A TROTSKYITE PARTY AND A MAOIST FACTION) FOR US IN HAITI NOT TO FOLLOW SUCH DEVELOPMENTS VERY CLOSELY, FOR US TO IGNORE SUCH A DECISIVE ELECTION IN A COUNTRY WHOSE CAPITAL IS ONLY 25 MINUTES BY AIR FROM PORT AU PRINCE."

3. AS IF ON THE WITNESS STAND TO SAY HE WAS NOT ALONE, CHARLIER THEN INVOKED THE NAMES OF WELL KNOWN REPORTERS FROM OTHER MEDIA, INCLUDING THE OFFICIAL RADIO STATION, WHO ALSO GAVE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE AND GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE ELECTION. HE SAID THAT SUCH REPORTING ALLOWS THE HAITIAN PEOPLE TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE EVOLUTION OF EVENTS IN A NEIGHBORING COUNTRY, PARTICULARLY THE SECRETS AND MYSTERIES OF A NEW GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATED WITH THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL. CHARLIER CONCLUDED ON AN OPTIMISTIC NOTE ABOUT FUTURE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND TOSSED A BOUQUET TO PRESIDENT JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER FOR HIS POLICIES WHICH PROVIDED STABILITY AND PEACE.

4. COMMENT: FOR SUCH A USUALLY SYCOPHANTIC MEDIA LEADER AS CHARLIER TO GO TO SUCH LENGTHS TO JUSTIFY HIS REPORTING IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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A CLEAR INDICATION OF THE DEEP TROUBLE HE MAY BE IN WITH SOME ELEMENTS OF THE GOH. THE ELECTIONS AND HIS EXHAUSTIVE REPORTING COINCIDE WITH INCREASING SPECULATION IN HAITI ABOUT THE NATURE OF ITS OWN LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS IN EARLY 1979 AND THE RUMORS THAT THE NEWLY CREATED NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR JEAN CLAUDIST ACTION (CONAJEC) MAY BE PREPARING THE WAY FOR A SUBSEQUENT "LEGITIMIZATION" OF THE PRESENT REGIME. IN THIS CONTEXT, CHARLIER'S REPORTING ON DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES MAY HAVE BEEN REGARDED AS UNWELCOME AND UNNECESSARILY FULSOME.

JONES

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